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RE-OPENING MEECH LAKE UNNECESSARY, SAYS ONTARIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 2, 1989

TORONTO -- The reports of the Manitoba and New Brunswick legislatures on the Meech Lake Accord fail to demonstrate a need to reopen it, Attorney General Ian Scott said in a statement delivered to the Ontario legislature today.

Scott tabled a legal assessment of the Manitoba and New Brunswick recommendations released last week. The Attorney General said several of the proposed changes such as New Brunswick's recommendation that Canada's fundamental characteristics be expanded to include multiculturalism and aboriginal rights, could be discussed in future constitutional rounds and posed no need to withhold ratification of the accord as it now stands.

Scott rejected the six specific changes to the accord sought by Manitoba. He told the legislature that while none of these changes address "fundamental flaws" in the accord, several strike directly at its heart by rejecting 3 of the 5 proposals that had been unanimously agreed to as being necessary for securing Quebec's willing assent to the Canadian constitution.

The Attorney General pointed out that while Meech Lake does not grant Quebec new powers, Manitoba's proposed changes to the "linguistic duality/distinct society" clause would result in Quebec enjoying less legal recognition of its distinct society than it currently does.


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In his statement, Scott identified the goal of constitutional reconciliation underlying the Meech Lake Accord as necessary for the future constitutional development of Canada. He urged the Manitoba and New Brunswick legislatures to join in the process of addressing their concerns within the framework of reconciliation that the accord offers.

"It is a moment that requires those who find fault with the compromises in the accord to take careful stock of the seriousness and significance of their concerns and to weigh them realistically against the consequences of turning a moment of national reconciliation into a moment of national estrangement," Scott said.

Reference:

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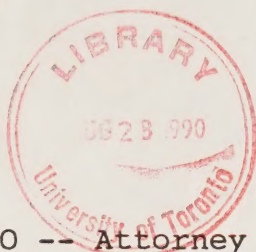
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ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR COURT REFORM

July 27, 1990

TORONTO -- Attorney General Ian Scott today announced that the implementation of Phase I of court reform will occur on September 1.

"The objective of court reform", said Ian Scott, "is to arrive at a simpler, more convenient and more expeditious system of courts for the benefit of the people of Ontario."

Under Phase I, the Ontario Court of Justice will be created. It will have two divisions. The Ontario Court (General Division) will bring together the District and High Court, along with the Small Claims Court and Surrogate Court. The Ontario Court (Provincial Division) will amalgamate the current provincial criminal and family courts.

Phase I will also ensure that judges with superior court jurisdiction will be available in all provincial counties and districts. It will no longer be necessary for people outside Toronto to wait for a judge to be sent from Toronto to their area to hear certain kinds of cases. "This will allow Ontario citizens greater access to the court system", said the Attorney General.

Another major change under Phase I is the regionalization of the judiciary. Regional senior judges, representing the general division and the provincial division, will manage judicial assignments in each of eight judicial regions across the province.

Each region will also have a regional courts management advisory committee. These committees, composed of members of the judiciary, the private bar, Crown Attorneys, court administration and the public, will work co-operatively to help ensure the smooth operation of the court system.

The increase of the Small Claims Court monetary limit to \$5,000 province-wide is another key initiative of court reform. Although this increase will not be implemented on September 1, it is anticipated to be in effect by the end of 1990. The ministry is currently making administrative arrangements in small claims courts in order to handle an anticipated increase in cases.

The implementation of Phase I is part of a series of comprehensive proposals for the structural reform of Ontario's courts to be completed in two phases. These proposals were announced by the Attorney General in May, 1989.

Under Phase II, the unification of the trial courts will be completed. The General and Provincial Divisions of the Ontario Court of Justice will be combined into a single trial court, consisting of three informal divisions specializing in criminal, civil and family matters. Phase II will also include the reform of the appeal structure of the court system.

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ATTORNEY GENERAL UNVEILS NEW FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN MARCH 29, 1993

Toronto -- "When parents don't pay, everyone else does," said Ontario's Attorney General Marion Boyd today as she unveiled a new four-week public education campaign about the province's Family Support Plan (FSP).

The campaign highlights the fact that in Ontario more than 120,000 children do without a half a billion dollars in child support payments. "Fathers need to be reminded and encouraged by their peers to live up to their parental obligations," said Mrs. Boyd. "If we are serious about meeting the needs of our children, the public can no longer tolerate excuses for non-payment of child support." Men compose 97 per cent of all payors who have support orders filed with the Family Support Plan.

"Paying your child support is the right thing to do. But when parents don't assume their obligations to their children, taxpayers end up footing the bill," said Mrs. Boyd. Currently, \$220 million is owed to the Ontario Treasurer as reimbursement for social assistance payments paid to support dependants and their children because child support was not paid.

"Your responsibility to your children does not end when your relationship ends. You can have a former partner, but you can never have a former child," said Mrs. Boyd. Currently, \$355 million in child support is owed to recipients.

Since introducing the province's new Family Support Plan last March, the number of families receiving support payments has increased from 40 to 68 per cent where automatic wage deduction applies. During its first full year, FSP collected and disbursed \$212 million in support for women and children.

"Although the FSP program is running well, we've had some growing pains during the first year of this new legislation. We will continue to make improvements so that the program will operate more effectively and efficiently," said Mrs. Boyd.

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FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN FACT SHEET

Caseload:

Total caseload prior to March 1, 1992, under Support and Custody Enforcement Program (SCOE): 93,400

Total caseload as of March 1, 1993, under new Family Support Plan (FSP): 109,200

Families receiving support payments:

Total cases prior to March 1, 1992: 40 %

Total cases as of March 1, 1993 where automatic wage deduction applies: 68 %

Money collected monthly for families:

Prior to March 1, 1992 : \$14 million

As of March 1, 1993: \$19 million

Money collected and returned to Ontario Treasurer as repayment for social assistance funds:

From March 1, 1991 to March 1, 1992: \$18 million

From March 1, 1992 to March 1, 1993: \$28 million

Family Support Plan annual budget: \$25 million

Money still owing:

To recipients: \$355 million

For recovery of social assistance payments: \$220 million

Total: \$575 million

Children to whom support is owed: 120,000

Support payors:

Men: 97 %

Women: 3 %

**Family Support Plan Central Inquiry Telephone Information Service
(1-800-267-7263):**

- Prior to establishing Central Inquiry Unit in 1990, program staff in regional offices were able to answer 28,000 calls per month.
- Implementation of Central Inquiry Unit permitted program to increase number of calls handled to 70,000 per month.
- In the fall of 1992, 16 new telephone lines were added and 10 part-time inquiry agents hired.
- In addition, the electronic voice response unit acquired a new feature which provides clients with automated case enforcement update information, as well as current payment and account details. Clients can obtain this information by entering their FSP case number on a touch-tone telephone.
- The automated information service hours have been extended to 8:30 p.m. from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, to further accommodate high volume of telephone calls.
- Central Inquiry service is now responding to more than 140,000 calls per month.

How Automatic Wage Deduction (AWD) works:

Under the Family Support Plan Act, where a court order is made for periodic support payments, the payments are routinely deducted from a person's wages or other income source. It is simple, convenient and effective. It ensures family support payments are treated as a priority.

How payors and recipients can help:

They can help ensure money is flowing as it should by providing the program with updated information by contacting their regional FSP office. For example, when someone moves, changes jobs or is laid off, payments get delayed or missed.



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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUND FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION

MARCH 27, 1990

Toronto -- Attorney General Ian Scott announced today that through the cooperation of government and private donors "The Fund for Dispute Resolution", a pool of more than one million dollars, has been created to finance research into alternatives to the traditional litigation process.

"Alternative dispute resolution" (also known as ADR) includes a variety of techniques like negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration which can operate either as an adjunct or as an alternative to the court system.

"This Fund will allow the citizens of Ontario to evaluate whether alternative dispute resolution can reduce the delays and expenses of the litigation system", said Mr. Scott. "This four year project represents an extraordinary opportunity for cooperation between government and the private sector, and for blending the experience of judges and lawyers with that of mediators, arbitrators, academics and community justice advocates", he added.

The "Fund for Dispute Resolution" is the first of its kind in Canada. The type of projects to be supported include training, education, and evaluation as well as a variety of pilot and demonstration projects.

The Fund has been established through the collaborative efforts and funding contributions of three different bodies - the Ministry of the Attorney General for Ontario (\$500,000); the Donner Canadian Foundation, a private, national foundation with a record of making grants in the ADR field (\$320,000 to support infrastructure costs of the Fund's four year existence); and the Law Foundation of Ontario, a public foundation which is financed through the interest on lawyers' trust accounts (\$300,000) for a total of \$1.125 million dollars. The three organizations welcome participation by other groups to enhance the Fund's research capacity.

Although the Ministry of the Attorney General is providing the largest share of the support, all donors have agreed that the Fund will be administered by a national, nonprofit organization, "The Network: Interaction for Conflict Resolution", located in Kitchener, Ontario. Formed in 1985, it is an association of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting better conflict resolution in criminal, civil and community disputes throughout Canada. Decisions on the allocation of funds will be made by a funding council appointed by the Attorney General, the Donner Canadian Foundation and The Network.

ADR techniques have long been used effectively in Canada to resolve labour disputes. Family mediation has been available for fifteen years in Ontario. Other examples of ADR techniques currently in use include mediation by the Workers' Compensation Board and by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Commission. The Fund will provide the capacity to determine through rigorous evaluation and research whether new and untried techniques offer solutions to the problems of delay, excessive costs, and lack of access to the justice system. At the end of four years, all participants will have the benefit of this research to guide them in the development of future policy and programs.

For further information, contact:

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The Network: Interaction for Conflict Resolution
Kitchener, Ontario (519) 744-6737



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March 27, 1990

Today, I announced the creation of the Fund For Dispute Resolution totalling \$1.125 million dollars at a press conference held at the St. Stephen's Community Centre in Toronto.

This Fund will enable us to provide the citizens of Ontario with opportunities to evaluate the impact of alternative dispute resolution.

Enclosed is a media kit containing information about the Fund. The kit includes a news release, a statement in the House, a background summary of alternative dispute resolution and a summary of the role of the St. Stephen's Community Centre -- a centre with a neighbourhood conflict resolution service.

If you require additional copies, contact the Court Reform Task Force of the Ministry of the Attorney General at 326-4680.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ian Scott".

IAN SCOTT
Attorney General



Ontario

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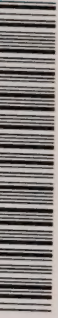
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